



House Elections and Ethics

House Bill 4876

Position: Oppose

The ACLU of Michigan is opposed to House Bill 4876, which would require election inspectors to sign an affidavit indicating their political party affiliation. While political parties can provide some layer of oversight on election day and throughout other election processes it not the only form of oversight and should not be at the exclusion of citizens who wish to assist with our elections who do not identify with a political party. The administration of elections should be objective as possible. This bill threatens that objectivity, injecting more partisanship into our elections by exclusively carving out too large of a role for the parties and their members.

Michigan voters are not required to register under a party to participate in elections and they should not be required to claim allegiance to one party in order to assist voters and count ballots. As currently written, interpretation of what constitutes party identification is ambiguous. This coupled with the requirement that election inspectors must sign an affidavit under penalty of perjury attesting to their party affiliation will put citizens' voting records under scrutiny at best and them at risk of being charged with a crime, at worst.

If the goal of this bill is to ensure more equal representation of the parties among election inspectors in precincts and counting boards, we would encourage alternative approaches such as requiring political parties to submit names of potential election inspectors to clerks or clerks notifying the parties of availability and need for inspectors from a particular party.

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